

Dictionaries

Types and Usage

What's a dictionary ?

A **dictionary** (also called a **wordstock**, **word reference**, **wordbook**, **lexicon**, or **vocabulary**) is a collection of words in one or more specific languages, often listed alphabetically, with usage information, definitions, phonetics, pronunciations, and other information; or a book of words in one language with their equivalents in another, also known as a **lexicon**.

According to Nielsen (2008) a dictionary may be regarded as a lexicographical product that is characterized by three significant features:

- (1) It has been prepared for one or more functions.
- (2) It contains data that have been selected for the purpose of fulfilling those functions.
- (3) Its lexicographic structures link and establish relationships between the data so that they can meet the needs of users and fulfill the functions of the dictionary.

Kinds of Dictionaries

Main Types of Dictionaries



Monolingual Dictionaries

They list the words within one language, giving meaning of these lexical items. These dictionaries, particularly English ones, vary greatly in terms of size and features, ranging from highly abridged pocket dictionaries to college desk dictionaries to stationary unabridged dictionaries. They may also vary as to the mode of presentation, e.g. English monolingual dictionaries present words alphabetically, whereas most Arabic ones present words in accordance with their tri-consonantal and quadri-consonantal roots. Further, some monolingual dictionaries are dedicated to special areas in the vocabulary of a language, e.g. there are dictionaries of English idioms, proverbs, scientific usage, etc.

Bilingual Dictionaries

They deal with two languages by listing the words within one language, say English, unexplained along with their equivalents in another language, say Arabic. So, the Arabic equivalents appear against each English word. If the dictionary is English-Arabic, the English words are presented alphabetically, but if the dictionary is Arabic-English, the Arabic words are listed according to their roots. Bilingual dictionaries range from highly impoverished pocket dictionaries to well-prepared college dictionaries. Further, many bilingual dictionaries on the market deal with specialized vocabularies by presenting SL terminologies and their TL equivalents in areas such as political, medical, and legal discourses.

Information in Monolingual Dictionaries

Monolingual dictionaries provide users with various kinds of information about lexical items. For example, the average English monolingual desk dictionary like *The Random House College Dictionary* or *The Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* usually furnishes the user with phonological, syntactic, semantic, and etymological information about English words, among their other things.

First: (Phonological Information)

It consists of phonemic transcription that indicates the pronunciation of the word, its syllable structure, and its stress pattern including both primary and secondary stress assignment in multi-syllabic words. For example :

Narcotism (*nár k tì m*).

Second: (Syntactic Information)

It indicates the part of speech of the word, that is, whether it is a noun, verb, adjective, or adverb, and also shows whether a verb is transitive or intransitive. For example:

Excite (transitive verb)

Excitement (noun)

Thirdly: (Semantic information)

It forms the core of what dictionary-makers do, as it revolves around the meanings of words in a language. So, the dictionary lists the various senses of words, occasionally giving some pictures of objects in the real world and some example sentences to illustrate rather abstract senses. It may refer to synonyms and antonyms of a given word in the course of explaining what word means. For example, ***The Random House College Dictionary*** lists the senses of the word **excess** and also mentions its synonyms and antonyms.

Each translator has skills that are needed in his job

1. The translator must fully understand the sense or meaning of the original matter.
2. The translator should poses a perfect knowledge of both the source and target language.
3. The translator should avoid what is referred to as word-for-word renderings.
4. The translator is advised to use such forms of speech that are in common use on the part of the receivers of the translated text.
5. The translator should choose and use his words in an appropriate way so as to produce the correct tune.
6. The most obvious skill that translators need is the ability to read and write, and understand a second language.
7. Translators must be able to receive ideas in one language and express them in another.
8. In addition to knowing a second language, translators need to know as much as possible about many things as possible.
9. Translators also need a thorough knowledge of the “ tools of the trade” (dictionaries, encyclopedias, reference books, catalogs, bibliographies, etc.) where to find them and when to use them.